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HERITAGE *Happenings*

Historic Biloxi Old Brick House

The Rodgers House, also known as the Old Brick House, is located at 622 Bayview Avenue in Biloxi. Owned by the City of Biloxi, the Old Brick House is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and was considered one of the most important structures in Biloxi even before numerous historic buildings were lost to Hurricane Katrina. The Rodgers House, while outside the mainstream of the building tradition in Biloxi, represents the period of Biloxi's earliest substantial settlement and the interest of New Orleanians in the area. The house is also of great architectural interest, representing a mingling of French Colonial and American traditions with perhaps a certain Spanish touch.

The Old Brick House dates to the mid-nineteenth century. Jean Baptiste Carquott received a grant of 285.73 acres, including this property, from the Spanish in 1784. Jean Baptiste Carquott died in 1824. His heirs sold the property to William Rodgers of New Orleans in 1843. Rodgers died in 1850, instructing in his will that the property be sold to benefit the poor boy's asylum in New Orleans. John L. Henley purchased the property,



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Mississippi Gulf Coast National Heritage Area

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There's nothing like a warm Gulf breeze on the Mississippi Gulf Coast, and though Spring is short-lived here in the south, our breezes are always in season.

And what better way to enjoy a southern breeze than on our waters aboard one of the Biloxi

Schooners. The Biloxi Schooners are back in service and sailing the Sound. The schooners are replicas of the boats once used for oyster drugging and shrimp seining for the canneries more than 100 years ago. For more information about daily schooner trips, refer to the article on pages 4 and 5 of this issue of *Heritage Happenings*.

Spring usually means we are getting ready to host the annual Coastal Development Strategies Conference, but although we are in the planning stages, we have moved the event to Nov. 7 and 8 to better accommodate our attendees. So, mark your calendars, and plan to attend the Coast's premier smart growth conference to be held this fall at the Hard Rock Hotel and Casino in Biloxi.

Re-enactment of the landing of Pierre LeMoyne Sieur d'Iberville will be held April 28 in Ocean Springs where he founded Fort Maurepas and established the first capital of the Louisiana colony—Biloxey—in 1699. In addition to the re-enactment, the 1699 Historical Society will be hosting other festivities, including live entertainment, a pet parade and a 5K run. Visit www.1699landing.org for details.

Other cities within the Mississippi Gulf Coast National Heritage Area will be celebrating the heritage of our natural resources and our seafood industry, including the Pass Christian Blessing of the Fleet, the Pascagoula Blessing of the Fleet and the Blessing of the Fleet and Fais do-do in Biloxi., the St. Clare Seafood Festival in Waveland and St. Paul's Seafood Festival in Pass Christian—just to name a few. (See Heritage Events calendar on back page.)

It is fair to say spring has sprung on the Coast, so enjoy a heritage event or two, and feel that sweet southern breeze.

Tina Shumate is the director of the Mississippi Gulf Coast National Heritage Area and the Mississippi Department of Marine Resources' Office of Coastal Management and Planning. She can be reached at (228) 523-4122 or tina.shumate@dmr.ms.gov.



holding it until 1872. Henley helped to direct the defense of the city in the Civil War. It was not much of a defense, however, as all the able-bodied men were off fighting, and there was little armament. A fake battery held the Union troops off for quite awhile, but when a demand for surrender had to be answered, there was not much else that could be done. However, the triumphant Union forces, stationed on Ship Island, found that there was nothing to fear from Biloxi and left the city in peace. Henley later became mayor of Biloxi.

Jacob Elmer bought the house from Henley and sold it in 1878 to Dr. Edward Bell of New Orleans for a summer home. Dr. Bell's family held it until 1921. After going through a series of uses, the building was leased in 1952 as a meeting place for the city's garden clubs. The ladies of the garden clubs raised money to restore the building. In 1966, the City of Biloxi deeded the property to the Biloxi Garden Center, by which time the restoration of the building was nearly complete.

The plan of the house is similar to the Tullis-Toledano House, which was destroyed by Hurricane Katrina in 2005, except that it is only one-and-a-half stories and both rear cabinets are usable spaces—the stair to the second floor rising from the rear gallery. The interior trim is simple and may not be original. A beaded baseboard in the upstairs hallway and some six-panel doors downstairs are perhaps the only original articles of trim remaining. Ceilings are boarded, some having simple cornices. On the exterior, the main gallery is a restoration of the one swept away by Hurricane Ca-

mille in 1969 and again by Hurricane Katrina in 2005. The dormers and the 9/9 sash are also restorations, and the rear gallery has been enclosed. The gable walls each have parapet walls and a chimney at the peak of the roof. The most unusual feature of this house is the composition of the main façade that is seven bays wide. In the center is the large main entrance door, having pilasters, sidelights, a transom and double doors. Midway between this doorway and each end of the façade are two other solid doors, symmetrically positioned. Originally, there was a detached kitchen to the rear of the house, connected by a covered passageway about 20 feet long. This structure was demolished when Bayview Avenue was constructed in the 1920s.

Heavily damaged by Hurricane Katrina, the City of Biloxi has worked with Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), Mississippi Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) and the Mississippi Department of Archives and History to restore this priceless historic resource so that residents and visitors may continue to learn about and enjoy a close-up view of Biloxi's cultural heritage, situated as the property is among active seafood industry businesses on the Back Bay of Biloxi.

The beautiful waterfront property is open to the general public 24/7, and the Old Brick House itself is available for special event rentals.

The City of Biloxi is pursuing grant funds to remove inappropriate plaster that was used during numerous repair jobs through the years and to replace it with plaster that is the same as the original in design, color, material and texture, in compliance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation.

Tidelands grant funds also have been applied for to enhance public access to and public safety along the Old Brick House's rear property line where it slopes into the Back Bay of Biloxi, which also will address shoreline erosion issues.

Contact Bill Raymond, Biloxi Executive Planner/Historic Administrator, for more information about this and other historic resources of Biloxi at (228) 435-6280 or braymond@biloxi.ms.us.

Article submitted by Bill Raymond, City of Biloxi.

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Schooners bring Coast history to life

The Maritime & Seafood Industry Museum opened in March 1986. The development of the museum had been the goal of a number of Biloxi citizens who, in the aftermath of Hurricane Camille in 1969, felt that an institution should be created to preserve, display and interpret the history and heritage of the Mississippi Gulf Coast and its seafood and maritime industries.

At the grand opening of the Museum, a program called “The Biloxi Schooner Project” was launched to construct two replicated 65-foot Biloxi oyster schooners to be used as educational tools, goodwill ambassadors, and to revive the once nationally famous Biloxi schooner races. These vessels were indigenous to the Gulf Coast area in the late 1800s and early 1900s as the workhorse of the canning factories drugging for oysters and seining for shrimp. Everything was done manually; it was hard labor. All the schooners were only equipped with halyards, and block and tackle. The schooners were rarely idle. If not shrimping, oystering, or transporting produce to and from other Gulf ports, they were either in the yard for repair and maintenance, or they were engaged in a third but very important function – racing. As a sport, racing competition was fierce. News reel companies loved to come down and film these working boats. The Gulf

Coast’s fleet of 300 to 400 sailing schooners began to diminish after World War I as more and more owners converted their boats to motor vessels. It was not until after 1933, however, when the state finally lifted a ban on motorized vessels on oyster reefs, and the working sails disappeared altogether.

In 1989 the Museum launched the *Glenn L. Swetman*, built by William “Bill” Holland, and in 1994, the second two-masted schooner, the *Mike Sekul*—built by Neil Covacevich—was launched. These schooners charter seven days a week along the Mississippi Gulf Coast.

“When seen on the horizon, it is like taking a step back in time—our ‘White Winged Queens’ sailing again,” said Robin Krohn David, Maritime & Seafood Industry Museum executive director.

Two-and-a-half hour, half-day or full-day charters for groups are available. A 2.5 hour sail for individuals is also available, and the schedule is set every month. Special two-hour educational sails for youth ages 5-12 are offered with each child having a turn at the helm and a history lesson on how the schooners were used to harvest seafood.

The Schooners have been great ambassadors for the Coast, traveling to New Orleans for the

opening of the Aquarium of the Americas, St. Petersburg, Fla. for a tall ship festival and again for the SuperBowl festivities. They have participated in the Battle of Mobile Bay several years, attended and been featured at the Madisonville Wooden Boat Show in Louisiana and have been featured many times on MS Public Broadcasting.

The Schooners are a vital part of the Sea-n-Sail Adventure Camp. The camp has grown from 185 children in 1992 to 525 children today. This year, camp starts on June 4 and runs for seven weeks. Children ages 6-13 learn about the history and heritage of these vessels. The older children actually sail out to Horn Island for a full day of exploration and fun! The younger children sail over to Deer Island for some cast net throwing and seining.

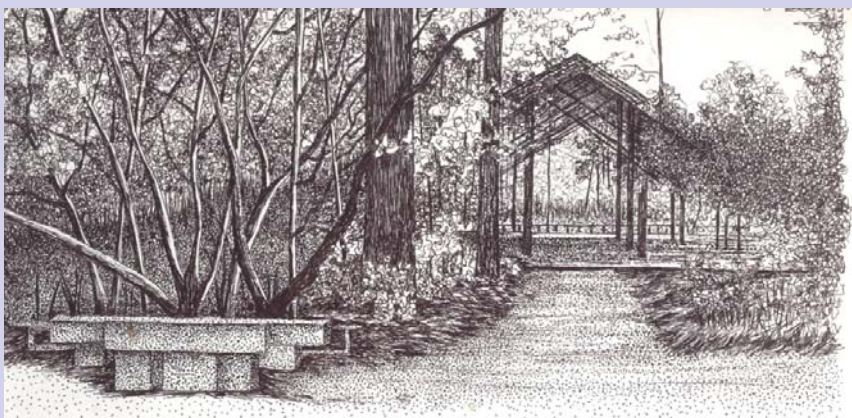
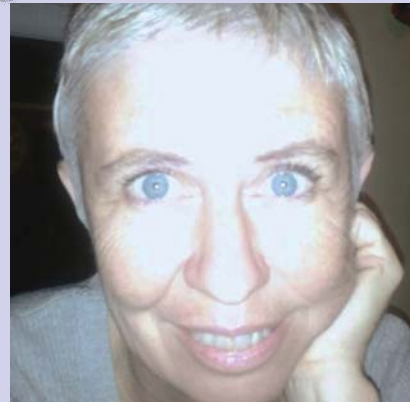
On May 19-20 the Schooners are feature vessels in the Museum’s Billy Creel Gulf Coast Wooden Boat Show which takes place at the Schooner Pier Complex, 367 Beach Blvd., Biloxi. Wooden boats from near and far gather at the pier and the public is invited aboard for viewing. The schooners offer sails every other hour, so you too can take a step back in time aboard one of these “White Winged Queens.” Call (228) 435-6320 for charter information.

Article submitted by Robin Krohn-David, Maritime & Seafood Industry Museum.



Artist's Spotlight

Artist: Robin Veerkamp
Studio: Studio Dixiedog
Hometown: Picayune, Miss.



1. When did you first discover that you had a talent for and an interest in art? I first discovered I had a talent and an interest in art when I was a small child. I would draw things for family members as gifts. When I was eight years old, I made a bird out of twigs and flower petals. Twenty years later, I was at my grandma's house and that picture was framed and hanging on my grandma's wall. I had made that for her when I was eight years old and it made me very happy that she loved it so much that she framed it and hung it on the wall. My grandma is gone now, but the picture hangs on a wall in my house so that I can always remember her. As a teenager I won some school awards in area art shows. It has always been an important part of my life. I never took my talent very seriously until I got older, however.

2. What inspires you? What artist has been your biggest influence? Nature inspires me! Plants, animals and the life around me is my inspiration. I love drawing plants and animals. For the past 11 years I have worked at Crosby Arboretum in Picayune, Miss. This has proven to be a great inspiration for me. Plant and wildlife abound here at all times of the year. Since I draw mostly from photographs, there is ample opportunity in my off moments to take a few pictures and work from them. I am currently working on a series of drawings of plants native to southern Mississippi. I also do pet portraits and have done several locally. Drawing eyes and

creating that feeling of kindness and love that pets give their owners makes all pet portraits well worth doing. The artists that have influenced me the most are John Banovich and Georgia O'Keefe. John Banovich is a wildlife artist from Montana whose work is exquisite reality. I've seen mostly images of African wildlife whose detail is amazing. I admire Georgia O'Keefe for her use of color. The vivid colors she used in her artwork are phenomenal. I try to incorporate both the realism of Banovich and the abstraction of color of O'Keefe in almost all of my work.

3. What medium/technique do you use most often in your art? I use chalk pastel and color pencil. I use mostly color pencil. I use chalk pastel on larger pieces that may require a large area of color.

4. What do you love most about the Mississippi Gulf Coast? What do I love most about Mississippi? Everything! I love the people and the weather the most. Nothing beats southern Mississippi for its beautiful weather. I moved here with my family in the late 1970s and I have moved away several times. However, I have always come back. There are none nicer than the people in Mississippi. It is truly the Hospitality State. I really love my hometown of Picayune.

To purchase Robin's art or to view more images of her work, Facebook Robin Veerkamp's Studio or contact her at (601) 337-0286 or e-mail robinv43@charter.net.



The Coastal Development Strategies Conference is *MOVING* to November!

The Coastal Development Strategies Conference, which has been traditionally held the second week in May, is moving to November. The 13th annual conference will be held Nov. 7-8, 2012, at the Hard Rock Hotel and Casino in Biloxi.

The conference is hosted by the Mississippi Department of Marine Resources (MDMR) Office of Coastal Management and Planning, Mississippi Gulf Coast National Heritage Area and conference partner, the Gulf Coast Business Council. This multidisciplinary event draws elected officials, city and county staff, contractors, developers, bankers, planners, zoning officials, realtors and appraisers, engineers, landowners, industry, students, federal and state agencies, boards of supervisors, lawyers, private and corporate entities, environmentalists, resource managers and others committed to rebuilding the Gulf Coast.

Details about the conference will be released in upcoming months. Updates will be posted on the MDMR Web site at www.dmr.ms.gov. For more information, contact Susan Perkins at (228) 523-4124 or susan.perkins@dmr.ms.gov.



Mississippi Gulf Coast
National Heritage Area
1141 Bayview Avenue
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April 21-22

Pass Christian Poboy Festival & Blessing of the Fleet, Festivities start at 10 a.m. daily. Pass Christian Harbor, Hwy. 90. Kids fishing rodeo, music, seafood and more. Decorated boat parade on Sunday. Spectators: Free. Details: (228) 452-5128.

April 28

1699 Landing of D'Iberville Festival, Festivities start at 9 a.m. Landing at 4 p.m. Downtown Ocean Springs. Live re-enactment, arts and crafts, food, music, 5K run, children & pet parade, etc. Spectators: Free. Details: (228) 875-7008.

April 28

Confederate Memorial Day @ Beauvoir, 11 a.m.-2 p.m., speakers,

memorial service and potluck lunch. Free with food donation for potluck. Details: (228) 388-4400.

May 19-20

17th annual Wooden Boat Show, 10 a.m.-6 p.m., Schooner Pier Complex, 367 Beach Blvd., Biloxi. Exhibits, demonstrations, music, children activities, food, contests, prizes and more. Admission charged. Details: (228) 435-6320.

May 24-27

11th annual Catfish Festival, Thursday-Friday, 5-11 p.m.; Saturday, 9 a.m.-11 p.m.; Sunday, 9 a.m.-6 p.m., St. Ann's Church grounds, 23529 Hwy. 53, Gulfport. Spectators: Free. Details: (228) 832-2560.

May 25-27

St. Clare Seafood Festival, Friday, 5-10 p.m.; Saturday, 11 a.m.-10 p.m.; Sunday, noon-9 p.m., St. Clare Catholic Church, 236 South Beach Blvd., Waveland. Spectators: Free. Details: (228) 467-9275.

May 26-27

Sounds By the Sea, 6:30 p.m. nightly, Memorial Day open-air concerts presented by Gulf Coast Symphony. May 26 - Jones Park, Hwy. 90, Gulfport; May 27

- Beach Park, Pascagoula. Free! Details: (228) 896-4276.

May 27

Jazz in the Pass, 2-8 p.m., War Memorial Park, Hwy. 90, Pass Christian. Blues, jazz & dixieland performances, arts & crafts, and more. Free! Details: (228) 363-1973.

May 31-June 3

35th annual St. Paul's Seafood Festival, Thursday, 5-10 p.m.; Friday, 5 p.m.-midnight; Saturday, noon-midnight; Sunday, noon-6 p.m. St. Paul Church grounds, 140 East Beach, Pass Christian. Spectators: Free. Details: (228) 452-4686.

June 2-3

83rd Fais do-do & Blessing of the Fleet, Fais-Do-Do: Saturday, 10 a.m.-9 p.m.; Blessing: Sunday, 2 p.m., Biloxi Town Green & St. Michaels Catholic Church. Visit www.biloxiblessing.com or call (228) 435-6339 for schedule details.

June 9

Pascagoula Blessing of the Fleet, 10 a.m.-2 p.m., Pascagoula River Park. Boat parade @ 1 p.m. Free! Visit www.pascagoulablessingofthefleet.com for details.